

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments, and reexamination and reconsideration of the subject application, and in light of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

The indication of allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged.

The final rejection fails to fully address the remarks in applicants' prior response that neither Jaraczewski (*et al.*) nor Weil teaches a compressed mesh. The final rejection acknowledges that Weil fails to disclose a compressed mesh but alleges that Weil is being used only for the composite hard and soft wires. Accordingly, Jaraczewski must provide a teaching or suggestion for a "compressed" composite mesh as recited in the claims, and this aspect is not addressed in the Office action.

A compressed element, as claimed, is sufficiently stiff to be used as a seal or bushing in high temperature applications. In stark contrast, Jaraczewski discloses a composite mesh (like the uncompressed, green article disclosed by applicants) that is used as a catheter. It is inherent and necessary for a catheter to have sufficient flexibility, especially as a vascular catheter (Jaraczewski at col. 2, ln. 26-29), to be fed through various vessels and cavities in the body (col. 5, ln. 51, to col. 6, ln. 14). There is no suggestion or teaching in Jaraczewski that the meshes be compressed, and compressing the meshes together would clearly decrease the flexibility of the catheter, likely rendering it useless. Jaraczewski teaches that flexibility of the catheter can be changed in different ways, and those ways relating to the meshes teach only varying the braid density and thickness (even if the density of the two braid layers were different, at col. 8, ln. 62-66).

Jaraczewski discloses, in fact requires, an interior polymeric flexible tube (10), the two braided mesh torque transmitting layers, and an outer flexible polymer casing (16). To further distinguish the present invention from Jaraczewski, claims 1, 9, and 10 have been amended to recite that the mesh element "consists essentially of" the composite wire meshes, to exclude the polymeric inner tube and outer casing of Jaraczewski. Especially for claims 9-15, nobody of ordinary skill in the art would include a polymeric material

in contact with a catalytic converter assembly. Regarding claims 1-8, if the polymer were present during compression (though now excluded by the amendment), the polymer's integrity would be destroyed, and if the compressed mesh were coated with a polymer, then the purpose of the composite hard and soft wires, which evidences improved characteristics at higher temperatures (e.g., page 6, ¶1), temperatures that would destroy plastics, would be defeated.

In sum, the claim limitation for a "compressed" element having the two mesh compressed together is a critical limitation that is not shown, taught, or suggested in either reference, thereby rebutting the *prima facie* case of obviousness, and so this rejection should be withdrawn.